

SCHOOL WITHIN A SCHOOL
A NEW CONCEPT IN THE EDUCATION OF
ACADEMICALLY TALENTED DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

A Report Prepared for the

Board of Education

Newark, N. J.

Mrs. Helen Fullilove, President
Dr. Michael Petti, Vice President

Mr. Charles Bell

Mr. Lawrence Hamm

Mr. John Cervase

Mr. Jesse Jacob

Mrs. Gladys Churchman

Mr. A. Thomas Malanga

Mr. Fernando Zambrana

Mr. Franklyn Titus, Superintendent of Schools
Miss Theresa S. David, Acting Assistant Superintendent,
Secondary Education

Prepared by

School Within A School Staff

Malcolm X Shabazz High School

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Dr. Leo Litzky, Principal
Seymour Spiegel, Director
Mrs. Gloria Sheldon, Editor
and Report Coordinator

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Chapter 1

THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

With much educational emphasis in urban schools today on the slow learner, the culturally disadvantaged, and the potential drop-out, the city of Newark has taken a bold step forward and committed funds to a program geared to the academic elite of the ghettos. These high-potential students, emerging from overcrowded and inadequate grammar schools, need the challenge of hard work and rigorous intellectual discipline to prepare them for college, where they will be expected to keep step with graduates of highly funded, academically-oriented suburban schools. The unasked question is there: can a student from the ghetto, if given every opportunity, overcome early educational deficiencies and compete for admission to the top colleges? Once there, can he stay, competing freely and successfully with his peers from highly dissimilar backgrounds?

According to an article in the Newark News, the number of Newark high school graduates has increased substantially during a recent 10-year period. In 1959, 37% of all graduates of Newark high schools went on to college; by 1969, that figure was 57%.

The big question, however, is how well do Newark students, especially those at the more demanding colleges, measure up against their fellow students from suburban and more advantaged backgrounds? The answer is that nobody really knows. According to the guidance counselors at Newark high schools, some colleges will send results for all four years, some for only one year, and some for none at all.

Any attempt at trying to poll Newark graduates would entail a massive expenditure of time and personnel, with no guarantee of results. Asking the colleges for such figures was also viewed as difficult.¹

The starting point in finding the answers to these difficult questions is the School Within A School program, where students move at their own rapid pace, absorbing four years of a modern foreign language, four years of an integrated English-social studies humanities program, four years of mathematics, and four years of science. In the normal scheme of things, these bright youngsters would attend an average inner-city high school, constantly burdened by the slower pace of their classmates. At SWAS, each student is guided, nurtured, and taught according to his own unique talents.

Many of the students travel five miles or more to get to school, using two or even three buses. They could go to a school a block from their homes, but they want the best possible education they can obtain in Newark. So they come to the School Within A School, located in South Side High School in Newark's Clinton Hill section, in the heart of a decaying ghetto. The school itself is a majestic

reminder of former glory, over 60 years old but retaining a certain archaic grace. It is now surrounded by vacant lots bearing the remains of rubble; all the houses on the same block have been torn down to make room for a long-awaited addition, which was recommended by evaluation committee of the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools as long as 12 years ago and which is now expected to be completed in 1974. Neighborly rats, deprived of their homes, are now invading the school en masse, nesting in book closets and furiously resisting the newly-distributed rat poison in every corner. But the SWAS students come every day, knowing that herein lies their hope for the future.

In Newark, where an overwhelming majority of the students are from minority groups, where there is a staggering drop-out rate, and where more than half of all students enter high school reading more than three years below their grade level, the SWAS students are attending school 11 months a year, exploring universal concepts of humanity and justice, juggling higher mathematics, and learning that the world is a place of promise for them.

NEWARK'S ACADEMIC DETERIORATION

The urgent need for school construction in Newark has had its deleterious effect on the academic achievement of its

school population. As indicated by a survey of the school buildings in use in 1967², and by the statements of the Superintendent of Schools that \$200,000,000 is needed to bring the schools up to standard operation condition,³ confidence that the city's financial resources will ever be sufficient to resolve its school problems is severely shaken. South Side High School is getting its new addition, Barringer High School is new and beautiful (although already overcrowded), but, with few exceptions, the elementary schools are dank and dark monuments to obsolescence.

The magnitude of the problem can be extended to the rest of the city's educational aspects. Information available from the Department of Reference and Research of the Newark Board of Education indicates consistently diminishing student scores on nationally standardized tests. Over a 10-year period, from 1956 to 1966, the median reading score for sixth grade students in the city dropped from 5.1 to 4.0, compared with a national norm of 6.2.⁴

This precipitous decline in reading skills achievement is almost matched by the arithmetic test scores for the same period which indicate that the median score of 5.8 deteriorated to 5.1 for Newark students as compared with the national norm of 7.2. On a secondary level, SAT scores also indicate a serious lowering of the ability of Newark students to perform acceptably on nationally standardized tests.

Ignoring the admitted problems of cultural bias on tests and the question of what scores on such tests really indicate, sufficient data is available to indicate that a distinct change has taken place, for a multiplicity of reasons, in the ability of Newark's youth to achieve academic excellence.

EFFORTS AT REMEDIATION

The obvious need for remediation for many Newark students has been met to some degree by the infusion of Title I ESEA funds and through other compensatory programs for disadvantaged youths. The city of Newark has made a strong and meaningful effort during the school years and in special summer programs to provide the necessary material and personnel for viable remediation programs. Motivational components have sought to encourage urban youth to aspire to professional goals which require advanced academic preparation and, in fact, at South Side High School alone, over 50% of all graduates go on to college. The problem, however, is not college admission; it is the ability to remain in college for four years.

According to figures available from the Secretary of the Board of Education's office, local expenditures for compensatory education programs during the fiscal year 1968-1969 totalled \$311,957, and Federal expenditures during

the same period for compensatory programs totalled \$6,233,539. This total of over six and a half million dollars in one year represents the recent normal level of spending in this area and indicates a firm commitment on the part of the Newark Board of Education to meet the needs of its underprivileged and educationally disadvantaged youth.

Significantly, during the same period, no special Board of Education monies were earmarked for gifted children, nor was any coordinated effort made to provide the city's gifted minority with opportunities for achieving their full potential. It is true that isolated classes for advanced standing (so-called "honors classes") do exist, and Arts High School is an excellent school for the artistically and musically talented. But, until the founding of the School Within A School in 1968, the city's educational thrust had been almost exclusively toward remediation.

Newark's financial problems, like those of most large urban cities, are staggering. Its property tax, of \$9.19 per \$100 valuation, is the highest in the state. Yet the amount spent to educate pupils in Newark, as compared to three other communities in New Jersey, indicates that Newark is falling far behind its more affluent neighbors in per capita educational expenditures. For example, in 1967, Newark spent \$588.60 per student. Today, it spends \$759.

Millburn, East Orange and Montclair average \$300 more per student, and Princeton, a wealthy suburb, spends \$1,740 annually, yet has a lower property tax (\$7.82 and \$7.93, in the borough and township respectively). In Newark, \$4.68 goes to the schools; in Princeton, \$3.51 and \$4.46 goes to the school system. Yet Princeton schools are modern and spacious; Newark's are antiquated and literally bursting at the seams.⁵

On January 19, 1971, New Jersey State Superior Court Judge Theodore I. Botter ruled that New Jersey's system of financing public-school education through local property taxes was unconstitutional. In a decision that follows similar rulings in California, Texas and Minnesota, Judge Botter declared that the system violated the equal-protection provisions of the State and Federal Constitutions. "The system discriminates against pupils in districts with low real property wealth and it discriminates against tax-payers by imposing unequal burdens for a common state purpose."⁶ The rulings in all four states are likely to be appealed to the United States Supreme Court. Perhaps a definitive decision will change the fact that, as of now, living in Newark and other large cities is tantamount to receiving a poorer education, both academically and financially, than a suburban child receives.

The academically talented child, until the founding

of the School Within A School, was left begging at the bottom of the priorities ladder. Yet the cost of not having such a program can be staggering: a leaderless people. A program such as SWAS offers a positive plan that can mean an end to the enforced ghetto, with highly educated leaders and professionals ready to take their place in the intellectual and economic hierarchy as productive members of the total society.

W.E.B. DuBois said in his early works that there is a need for a "Talented Tenth" among the black population to provide the leadership necessary to elevate the entire population. He was referring to a college-educated leadership to give impetus to greater opportunities for all the people. It is hoped that programs like the School Within A School will proliferate and raise DuBois' projection far beyond his original expectations.

THE NEGLECT OF THE GIFTED

In a landmark two-volume report by the U.S. Office of Education, it is noted that most of the nation's academically able youngsters are the victims of "widespread neglect" by the nation's schools.⁷ "Educational neglect and apathy," the report stated, are particularly evident among gifted children whose social and school environments are "calculated to stifle potential talent..."We are

increasingly being stripped of the comfortable notion that a bright mind will make its own way."⁸

The 11-month study included a survey of educational leadership in the field of the gifted child; public hearings in the 10 regional offices of the Separtment of Health, Education and Welfare; and surveys of state and federal programs benefitting such children.

Among its findings were that programs for the gifted are practically non-existent for minority group children. One reason is that such programs are a "very low priority" at all economic levels and for all groups. Another is that the identification of gifted minority group children is doubley difficult: standardized group testing uncovers less than half and individual tests are expensive to administer. In fact, group ratings tend to be higher for the below-average individual, while, for the above average, group test scores are lower than those obtained on the individually administered Binet test scale. The study concluded that, "The most highly gifted children were penalized most by group test scores: that is, the higher the ability, the greater the probability that the group test would overlook such ability."⁹

Contained in the report were various recommendations, including the three characteristics that any program for the gifted should have:

1. A differentiated curriculum which denotes higher cognitive concepts and processes.

2. Instructional strategies which accommodate the learning styles of the gifted and talented children as well as curriculum content.
3. Special grouping arrangements which include a variety of administrative procedures appropriate to particular children, i.e., special classes, honor classes, seminars, independent research, resource rooms, and the like.¹⁰

The School Within A School at South Side High School was founded three years before this government report, yet all of the above recommendations have been part of the SWAS program since its inception.

A CONCEPTUAL HISTORY OF A SCHOOL WITHIN A SCHOOL IN NEWARK

A concern for the needs of the academically gifted has a long history in the city of Newark. In 1918 the city initiated the nation's first junior college in the South Side High School building. Upon completion of the two-year program at South Side, students were granted third-year status at New York University in a regularly matriculated degree program. This junior college project, actually a School Within A School, was discontinued after a two-year trial. As the nation recovered from the difficult Depression years and moved into the war years of the 1940's, the need for a special academic high school was not strongly felt because almost all Newark schools were academically oriented, enjoying great prestige and leading to college for a majority of their students.

As the 1950's unfolded, demographic patterns began to shift and a great influx of people from Southern states and from Puerto Rico brought new problems to the school system.¹¹ The children either were Spanish-speaking or had attended segregated Southern schools of dubious quality. The effect of the sudden influx of these young people on the existing schools in the city was dramatic. By 1958, a report to the Board of Education entitled, "Specialized High School for Talented Youth," prepared by a group of principals of the city, indicated their serious concern for the deterioration of academic standards in the secondary schools. The Committee presented a report which recommended a comprehensive high school plan for the city, and spoke favorably in behalf of specialized programs for gifted children. The concept developed was that at least one high school in the city should develop a very strong academic program to which promising and highly motivated young people could transfer at will. The term "School Within A School" was not used at that time, although the concept for such a school had long before been implemented in secondary education in some parts of the country.

Chapter 2
SCHOOLS WITHIN SCHOOLS -
A NEW IDEA IN EDUCATION

The concept of schools within schools has been growing in the United States for the past quarter of a century, and is now incorporated into hundreds of schools at the junior and senior high school levels. The main purpose of the plan is to individualize instruction by subdividing a large student body into smaller groups for the purpose of instruction and guidance.

The basic theory behind this organization is that each large secondary school be divided into more or less independent little schools which share some facilities but retain a significant degree of autonomy in curriculum development, scheduling, and in student personnel procedures. The purpose of schools within schools is to provide "a broad program of high quality combined with the atmosphere and friendliness of a small school."¹² Ramsey, Henson and Hula, in The Schools Within a School Program, enumerate some of the reasons which led their school, Topeka West, toward this small-school concept:

1. A modern secondary school in a democracy must be concerned with the maximum growth and development of the individual.
2. As secondary schools grow in size and become comprehensive,...there is an increased possibility that the

individual approach will give way to the mass approach to education.

3. The four functions to be performed in a high school - instruction, guidance, supervision, and administration - can be performed best by teachers and administrators working as a team. 13

Specific advantages of the plan are:

1. To pupils:

- a. The individual pupil has closer pupil-teacher relationships. He forms friendships with the faculty from his unit while retaining loyalty to the entire school. These friendships continue over a longer period of time, often for the entire four years of his high school career.
- b. The guidance program improves, since individual abilities are more easily recognized and developed.
- c. When classes are scheduled within each unit, subject matter integration and continuity are improved.
- d.. A strengthened student activities program results from increased opportunities for participation, leadership and socialization.

2. To staff:

- a. The principal of the larger school unit is relieved of administrative routine, which is handled by the director of each individual school within a school, and is thus freed to a greater extent for true instructional leadership. At the same time, several staff members receive guided administrative experience within the little schools.
- b. There is more effective student control. The pupil feels he is known; indeed, he is known. Problem pupils and situations are recognized and handled more easily.
- c. Teachers play a larger role in policy and curriculum decisions, thus fostering higher teacher morale.
- d. There is a greater willingness to experiment with new, innovative ideas within each autonomous school.¹⁴

Newark's School Within A School was founded for all of the above reasons and more, even more pressing ones: the need to grasp the spark of motivation and drive that had carried these talented minority group pupils thus far, and to nurture this drive before it was extinguished in the vacuum of mediocrity.

Chapter 3

OPERATIONAL DESIGN

SITE SELECTION

South Side High School is located in the South Ward of the city in a low income area not yet fully recovered from the riots of 1967. The school's population is virtually all black. The neighborhood has not been included in the area designated for Model Cities renewal, and consists primarily of multiple family dwellings more than 50 years old. Bus lines pass close to the school from every area.

By selecting South Side as the site for a school within a school, the Board of Education chose to create a school for the "black elite" in the very center of the black ghetto. In determining a need "to stimulate high academic potential and a competitive contagion in all schools for academic achievement," the Board of Education apparently hoped that the most academically gifted 8th grade children from throughout the city would participate in this special academic program. Yet, Newark's racial polarization predetermined that, because of the school's location, the overwhelming majority of applicants would be black. White children who reside far from the South Ward area are reluctant to attend. The members of the Board of Education

believe, nevertheless, that with burgeoning success, the magnet of high achievement opportunities, plus scholarship help, will ultimately contribute to the racial integration of the School Within a School.

South Side's new addition will also provide the latest in equipment and classroom design to help accomplish the goals of the program. The present building opened its doors for the first time in 1913 and has not been significantly renovated since that time. New lighting fixtures, floor tiling and acoustical tiles have been installed, but the gymnasium remains the same, the food service capabilities remain the same. The classrooms, laboratories, and library are severely limited in equipment and size. However, by 1974, not only will the 45-room addition be completed, with new gyms, auditorium, and laboratories, but the entire existing structure will also have been renovated.

The administrative staff of South Side High School is also eminently well qualified for the development of a SWAS program. The principal, Dr. Leo Litzky, was instrumental in developing the Newark Plan at West Kinney Junior High School, which was the prototype of the Title I Project N.E.E.D.E.D. under which Newark currently receives its E.A.E.A. money. His evident interest in innovation and his creative, flexible administrative techniques provide fertile ground for the SWAS seedling to grow and flourish.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

A massive talent hunt was underway in Newark in May and June of 1969. By means of circulars distributed to principals and teachers throughout the city, an attempt was made to single out those students who would most benefit from the school within a school idea. Such students would have high academic marks in the eighth grade; show a degree of maturity and independence; and be willing to attend school 11 months a year, working harder than their peers for a desired goal. Many schools were visited and many students and teachers approached. An initial class of 116 students was finally recruited. The maximum number of students SWAS can accept each year is 150, so it is obvious that, that first year, almost all who applied and whose recommendations seemed reasonable, were accepted. In general, they all read at grade level or above, were leaders of their class, and wanted to attend. Today, a more sophisticated battery of tests and a larger recruitment staff are used. Yet, somehow, that first class turned out well: there is a ~~spring~~ling of very heady I.Q.'s, and the rank and file are definitely superior students.

Today, each applicant is required to take standar-dized math and reading tests, to submit a composition on a predetermined subject (written at an exploratory session),

and to be interviewed. In addition, his former teachers must write a dossier on many phases of his academic and extracurricular achievement. In the third year of recruitment, over 250 students applied, from which 150 were selected. Some of the students were difficult to turn down; all had valid reasons for wanting to get into the program.

This Spring, another talent hunt will take place, searching for that ineffable gleam of promise that differentiates the potential SWAS student from his classmates. The staff will again select 150, keeping their collective fingers crossed that the right choices were made.

STUDENT ORIENTATION

After students are selected and notified through their elementary school principals, several orientation days are held during the June preceding their admission, attended by both new students and their parents. After the faculty is introduced, the director of the program, Mr. Seymour Spiegel, explains the program in detail, emphasizing the comparatively heavy homework load, the five majors, the independent study, and the 11-month school year.

Many of the students were at the top of their class in elementary school without having to expend much real effort to stay there. The transition from elementary to high school is always traumatic; in the case of these

youngsters, it is doubly so, for they are, for the first time in their lives, in classes where every student is a "star"; and there are 25 other teacher's pets as smart and engaging as they. For some, the experience is ego-damaging; they are suddenly just one of the crowd, and the whole crowd is bright and eager.

Fortunately, the School Within a School structure allows for easy communication and a great deal of guidance during these first hazardous weeks. In most cases, the adjustment is made successfully. However, during the first three years of operation, some 10 to 12 students have been requested to transfer out of the program each year, and about the same number leave voluntarily, some because they have moved out of Newark, others because the program is simply too rigorous for them.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Now that students were recruited, what would be the best things to teach them? Out of the vast smorgasbord of the world's knowledge, which selections would best suit such students? It was decided that, since the curriculum is geared to eventual college admission, the total academic requirement would include the following minimums: four years of a correlated humanities program (English, history, art and music); four years of mathematics; four years of one modern foreign language; and four years of integrated science with

strong laboratory emphasis.

Humanities Curriculum

The course of study is highly innovative in many of its aspects, especially for an urban school that is drastically overcrowded. English and history are totally integrated. The traditional chronological sequence has been discarded in favor of the development of themes studied longitudinally, such as "Man Against the Establishment" or "Cities: From Antiquity to the Present" or "The Changing Concepts of Justice". This conceptual approach allows the student to explore all related disciplines, including art and music, for ideas and forces that have motivated man and influenced his culture. This method covers major historical and literary periods, but approaches them conceptually and developmentally. Every effort is made to give the students the ambience of each era. For example, justice cannot be explored in the Greek and Roman eras without first understanding the political and philosophical ideas of the period. Sacco and Vanzetti are martyrs only if the background is fully understood. Thus each major idea is probed both vertically and in the context of its historical environment.

The major theme woven through the first three years is Man, adhering to Alexander Pope's edict that, "The proper

study of mankind is man." The first year explores man in relation to his gods; actually, a course in comparative religion, with guest speakers representing the clergy of all faiths. This starts with Greek and Roman mythology, and moves into the mythos of other nations, including Africa, China, and the near East. The rise of Christianity leads into the Middle Ages. Shakespeare is introduced via Julius Caesar and an analysis of the misuse of power. All through the year, the students are writing (ten written book reports yearly), doing extensive research papers, making oral reports, and writing compositions, poetry, and short stories. It is a heavy schedule. It is the only way.

Some of the topics covered in the 10th grade classes are the Renaissance, the rise of humanism, the age of satire, and the age of revolution, during which the causes of revolution are analyzed in the light of the major upheavals -- the French, American, Russian, Chinse, and finally, the black revolution now taking place in this country. In each case, the English and history teachers work closely, integrating ideas and literature, lecturing jointly when desirable. The art teachers and music specialists are also an important part of the team approach, for the term "humanities" is an empty one without art. The students see the art and hear the music of the times which they are reliving.

In the eleventh year, the emphasis is on modern times

and its problems, starting with the Romantics, the Industrial Revolution, life in the cities, and man in conflict with other men: the war epochs. Brave New World is back to back with Candide and Manchild in the Promised Land. Keats, Thoreau, and Shakespeare (Othello, this time) are mined for their ideas. Is life in the city now so different from what is was then? Why? How? Is the soldier in the Civil War different from his atom-bomb-bearing counterpart in World War II? Is the Harlem Renaissance comparable in any way with the 15th century version? It is the whole world of man's ideas and, hopefully, a crack in the hard shell that is the ghetto.

The twelfth year, in all of the disciplines, will be a selection of mini-courses, similar to a college program. Thus, those students who dislike math will be able to elect around it, while those who love it can elect two or more mini-courses in it. The mini-courses are an attempt to break away from rigid requirements. Because of their 11-month school year, most of the students have more than enough graduation credits by the time they are in their senior year; the mini-courses permit this year to be a time of experimentation into fields which have already captured their interest.

The Math-Science Curriculum

Every attempt is made to include the math-science teachers in the interdisciplinary approach. When Brave New

World was read by the juniors, the biology teacher was asked to lecture as a guest speaker on the status of embryology in today's world. When the Enlightenment was being studied in the humanities classes, Newton and Darwin were being discussed in physics classes. When ecology was being studied in biology, humanities student did research into all areas of this pressing problem, including actually cleaning up the grounds of the school. (It stayed clean for one day.)

Generally, the freshmen take biology, the sophomores chemistry, and the juniors physics, all taught as laboratory sciences, employing inquiry-discovery techniques. The fourth year of science will be devoted to advanced studies in earth science, comparative anatomy, physiology, or other areas of student interest.

Mathematics is also taught conceptually. Following the initial year of algebra, intermediate algebra is taught, and then geometry, in an effort to help the student understand the relationship of the two mathematical concepts. Fourth year math will include optional courses in calculus, probability and statistics.

Foreign Language Curriculum

Every SWAS student studies four years of one modern foreign language through the latest techniques of aural-oral instruction, to insure fluency and idiomatic expression. The Ulpan approach to learning a new language is employed every

summer for at least one full week, during which time the student is totally immersed in the language, to the exclusion of all other studies. This includes total absence of English in the classroom, and visits to the U.N., films, and restaurants where the language is spoken.

Experience to date indicates that approximately 60% of the students elect Spanish and the remaining 40% French. The projected trip to Europe, which, if financially feasible, will be part of every senior's experience, gives impetus to the study of a foreign language.

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM TEACHING

Team teaching as a way of imparting more information to students has its supporters and detractors. A review of some of the literature reveals that team teaching was being utilized in over 41% of 7,000 accredited high schools surveyed in 1967, a substantial increase over the 1964 estimate by the National Association of Secondary School Principals that 22% of the secondary school used it at that time. However, of 27 innovative methods no survey said, team teaching had the fourth highest abandonment rate: 4.3%.¹⁵

The main purposes of the team approach to teaching, according to Beltz and Shaughnessy, are:

1. To provide flexibility in the grouping of students.

2. To provide flexibility and variety in the time allocations of the five academic majors.
3. To define and develop learning experiences which cultivate greater efficiency in independent study.
4. To give teachers more meaningful and substantive decision-making powers.
5. To provide a climate which encourages sharing among teachers of the same grade level as they respond to problems common to all or some of the team disciplines.
6. To encourage cooperative planning, teaching and evaluation on the part of teachers.¹⁶

According to Meyer and others, the major problems are inter-personnel disputes, and the fact that the mechanics of the planning tend to dominate the actual teaching. As an alternate plan, and the one being used at the School Within A School, he suggests the interdisciplinary team, in which the focus is on "...developing a team of specialists from different subject areas who can work together and pool their abilities in attacking the learning problems of a group of students for whom they are mutually responsible." This is in contrast to the more common technique of team teaching within one discipline, and answers the common question, "Why team teach?"

The advantages of the interdisciplinary team are many. In the subject-matter area, the student receives the benefit of learning the subject thematically, with each team member contributing his knowledge to the "pool." In addition, each

team member knows the same group of students intimately, knows what the other teachers are doing, and can plan innovatively with them. There are no detailed curriculum guides at SWAS, just general course outlines, so that each teacher can exercise his individuality and imagination in developing his course, working with the other team members and willing to be flexible enough to realize that there are very few "musts" in any one body of knowledge. He is concerned with the total educational picture.

The team meeting is an important part of this form of team teaching. Each teacher at SWAS teaches only four periods daily, to allow time for curriculum development and team meetings, which take place daily for a least 40 minutes. This title is often a euphemism for a spirited debate over techniques, content, grading systems, and why Johnny is failing French. The meetings are held anyplace where no one else happens to be at the moment, and are coached by one of the three current team leaders. It is at these meetings that new schedules are formulated, trips are discussed, new books are reviewed, new films are previewed, parent conferences are arranged, and group decisions regarding individual students are reached. The meetings also serve to bring the team members closer together in terms of friendship, thus building a team spirit and high morale.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM

Independent study is a key idea in developing the potential of the gifted students in the SWAS program. Willard J. Congrove speaks about the "self-generating student."¹⁷ There is little question that the kind of students who are enrolled in SWAS are the future leaders of their community and may ultimately have the responsibility for developing courses of action which may depart from the orthodox.

The school must nurture in these potential leaders the ability to develop a course of action on their own; i.e., to be self-generating. In the final analysis, the opportunity for them to develop their potential to its fullest can only be done in an individualized, independent manner. Through their entire adult lives they will be expected to forge ahead into new areas of endeavor. They will be expected to provide the foresight and the constructive ideas upon which a society builds. Unless these children learn how to use their own resources and provide their own conceptual development in breaking new ground, the society will fail in developing its leaders. The faculty and administration of SWAS are committed to the concept of the self-directed student, one who can select his life style, his objectives, and his courses of action, with an eye to realistic goals.

With independent study, each student works at his own speed, pursuing his own interests. Learning becomes an

individual process of discovery, as he creates his own course of study and becomes enmeshed in the world of ideas.

The School Within a School is so scheduled as to provide a block of time each day for the student to research his own projects. These projects, for which credits are given, are in varying lengths. One student recently completed a 40-page paper on abnormal psychology, fully documented and highly detailed. Another may work in science, in math, in art, in music, or in history. After reading an excerpt from Walden, one student read the entire work, as well as Thoreau's life.

Independent study is defined by William M. Rogge:

Independent work or reading sometimes on one's own and sometimes in small groups, but with such work taking place in the absence of the teacher and in lieu of certain regularly scheduled class meetings...An independent study program...provides a formal opportunity on an institutionalized basis for the pursuit of special topics or projects for individual students under the guidance of faculty advisors apart from organized courses.¹⁸

The significance of this definition is that independent study must be sustained and carefully integrated before it can be called a program. At SWAS, the first year of independent study was not successful. Students who were geared to constant supervision were uneasy with the 40 minutes a day to do as they pleased, and they often pleased to wander the halls or take refuge in a classroom with a favorite teacher. One well-motivated and somewhat braver girl made a costume

for a doll in the Grecian mode. Others tried brief research papers. But it wasn't until the hiring of Mrs. Edith Shadowitz, a resource-research librarian, that the program sprang to life. A modern Renaissance type, Mrs. Shadowitz majored in math and science at Trenton State College, worked as a social worker and as a mathematician, taught mathematics at Barringer and Central High Schools in Newark, then switched careers in mid-equation and took an M.L.S. from the Rutgers Graduate School of Library Service where, not surprisingly, she was elected to Beta Phi Mu, international honorary society in librarianship. She eventually became head librarian at Weequahic High School in Newark, at the time a highly academic secondary school with many advanced placement programs and a demanding faculty.

At the School Within a School, Mrs. Shadowitz has been given a special room (once part of the library and deeply mourned by the regular high school librarians) equipped with work tables and a bare minimum of such aides as reference books, typewriters (one), and audio-visual aides. It is hoped that, as more funds become available, each student can work at a learning carrel, in relative privacy.

In this room, Mrs. Shadowitz maintains records on how each student is progressing. At the present time, the program is limited to juniors, who have the self-motivation necessary to follow a project through to completion. There are some failures, but there are enough successes to justify the continuation of the program.

Chapter 5

INNOVATION: THE KEY WORD AT SWAS

From the start, every effort was made to keep the program highly flexible and innovative. Everything is tried, at least once. Highly audible failures are balanced by lower-decibeled but greatly satisfying successes. No two days are alike; the student can find no security in sameness and thus is constantly adapting himself to the unexpected, which is a life lesson in itself.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

Flexible scheduling is not a new concept. However, it is new as it is being done at SWAS; that is, an attempt to ignore the imperious bells of the larger school and keep one small group of students on an entirely different schedule from the majority. This effort, to operate independently of the rest of the building, has enabled SWAS teachers to set their own time schedules, their own class length, and their own teaching patterns. It also necessitates constant jumping of rooms, books, and people.

For example, if one teacher feels he needs a two-and-a-half hour time block for a speaker, a film, a play, or whatever, he presents his idea at a team meeting, and the other teachers on the team ~~to~~ restructure their day, including

provisions for making up time lost in the other disciplines by different schedules for the next day or two. There is one room in the school set up like an amphitheater and large enough to accommodate 100 students at a time. It is to this room that speakers are brought, as well as films, physics demonstrations, lectures, seminars, elections, oral reports, and meetings. It is a very handy room and much utilized.

The advantages of this type of flexibility are numerous. There is no need to repeat a lecture four times, tests can be given en masse, and, most important, there is no bell to interrupt a lesson which, given another 10 minutes, would be fully developed. The only toes on which treading must not be done are those of the gym and health teachers, who do not look kindly on a missed gym period. Thus, gym and health are scheduled for the first or second period of the day, leaving the rest of the day formless, ready to be divided into pieces of any size.

THE SUMMER PROGRAM

All students accepted into the program must agree to attend school 11 months a year. For most, the summer program, despite the outside (and inside) temperatures, is a highly rewarding experience, for there are few others in the building and space, at a premium all year, is suddenly

vast. Experimentation of all kinds is done. Each team decides how it wants to handle its summer. In the three years that the program has been extant, many ideas have been used.

Parkway Program

The original Parkway program was started as an experiment in Philadelphia in 1968. Named after Benjamin Franklin Parkway, a mile-long boulevard beginning at City Hall and culminating in the Museum of Art, it is a school "without grades, marks, arbitrary rules, authority figures, a building and, according to its supporters, boredom."¹⁹

The idea is to dissolve the walls of the classroom, to let the students learn wherever learning seems most feasible: in offices, museums, science centers, hospitals, theaters, department stores, luncheonettes - even the Automat. The students, selected by lottery, study law enforcement at the Police Department, library science at the Public Library, and biology at the Academy of Natural Science. The program is part of the innovative climate established by Superintendent of Schools Mark Shedd, and is directed by 14-year-old John Bremer.

In addition to their on-site learning, the students meet in tutorial groups of 15 students and two teachers. During their two-hour, four-day-a-week sessions, the student plans his schedule, receives counseling, and makes up deficiencies

in basic skills. There are no grades given; instead, an extensive written evaluation is made of each learning experience.

At SWAS, such a program is in operation on a limited scale. One summer, students spent four weeks at the Prudential Insurance Company, working with their personnel on actuarial math, including a rudimentary look at the role of the computer. Another group went to the Trenton State Museum to look at Indian artifacts excavated in New Jersey, capping a week of study of the American Indian as a minority group in America. Still another group worked daily in the Newark Public Library, researching the American Indian, the Middle Ages, and other topics related to the year's work. The Fish Hatchery was the destination of another group, working with fish embryology. This group also visited the Coney Island Aquarium. Meanwhile, the French students visited the United Nations and a French restaurant, and Spanish students explored the Hispanic Society's museum in New York City.

This "school without walls" approach holds great promise for the future, as a means of relieving overcrowding of many urban schools and of providing life experiences in addition to the vicarious learning stored in books. It is, of course, somewhat expensive. Buses, sometimes two or three, are needed daily. While bus tickets provide a relatively inexpensive way of reaching local destinations, charter buses

are mandatory for trips outside of the city. The program can be modified; in the case of SWAS, some time is spent in the classroom, preparing the students for their outside learning experience. Thus, all students do not leave the building every day or for the whole day.

The Gill School Program

The Gill School in Bernardsville is a prestigious private school in the fox-hunting area of New Jersey. During the summer of 1971, they sponsored a summer program in Environmental Field Studies and Urban Studies, offering 16 scholarships to disadvantaged Newark high school students. SWAS sophomores won all 16. This fact attracted favorable publicity to SWAS. The Star Ledger wrote:

A barometer of the academic effectiveness of the school can be seen from a recent experience: 16 scholarships were offered by the Gill School of Bernardsville to Newark students to attend its six-week summer program on urban studies and ecology. All 16 scholarships were won by students from School Within a School.

The students in the field ecology program read books on pollution, visited the Great Swamp, analyzed the water in Lake Passaic, visited a city dump, went to Flandy Hook, heard lectures on geology, and in general learned a great deal about the nature of man's environment.

In the Urban Studies program, the students heard guest college lecturers, visited the Morristown City Hall, jails, housing authorities, the County Prosecutor's office,

Bellevue Hospital, the state capitol in Trenton, and Princeton University. The program featured an overnight trip to Hartford, Connecticut, to visit various state agencies, including an audience with Governor Thomas Meskill.

The six-week program, funded by the Victoria Foundation, also provided transportation by train for the Newark youngsters. John C. Littleford, director of the program, wrote at its conclusion:

I have immense admiration for your students. It is beyond the ken of most of us here how these youngsters can get up so early in the morning and travel for such a distance to come to an educational program in the summer. Most of the students from Newark did not miss a single class. Two or three of them missed two or three times. This is almost a ninety-five per cent record, and I am pleased by it, as I know you are, too.²¹

In another letter, to the Victoria Foundation, Mr. Littleford said:

...the black students from Newark have been completely assimilated into the Urban and Environmental programs, and have been working very closely with the rest of the students in achieving and maintaining a high level of performance as judged by written, oral, and research work...without the Newark students, the program would somehow have seemed empty and without meaning.²²

If the program is repeated this year, SWAS has been assured of further scholarships.

Other Summer Programs

Another successful program was run by the sophomore English teacher, in an effort to improve the speech of some of the students. Through choral readings of black poetry,

the use of tape recordings of the students' voices, and by the presentation of an assembly program, gains in speech quality were noted.

For the freshmen, much of the summer is devoted to remediation of basic skills, to prepare the student better for algebra, for biology, and for research projects in the humanities.

THE MINI-COURSE CURRICULUM

A basic weakness of the program is that all of the students, aimed at the same goal, are on the same track: because of highly overcrowded school conditions, there are no rooms available to offer a variety of courses. A student who leans toward a career in science thus has few opportunities to specialize, other than independent study.

To overcome this problem, plans are currently underway to offer mini-courses starting in September, 1972.

According to James Fenwick,

The mini-course curriculum enables a secondary school to offer a wide variety of prime interest, short term courses which are normally outside the available curriculum structure...Regular members of the faculty, the students themselves, plus members of the community, all have much to contribute in the way of special capabilities which lend themselves to the mini-course concept.²³

The first step in setting up the program was to recruit experienced and creative faculty members from outside of SWAS to come up with a list of such possible courses, and to actually write three or four of them in detail. Funds

for this undertaking were provided for in the Board of Education budget.

Next, the list was submitted to a representative group of students for a rating system. Some of the largest vote-getters were Current Black Leadership in America, Prison Reform, Emerging African Nations, and Problems of Overpopulation.

Each course will run from two to six weeks, depending on its content, and will be on a pass-fail basis, with credit given for successful completion. In addition to the regular SWAS faculty, successful professional people from the community will be recruited, as well as teachers from the high school proper.

If successful, the mini-course curriculum will make learning more responsive to the changing interests of the students and provide a means to offer a wide diversity of subject areas. The courses will be programmed so that each student satisfies the state requirements in each major subject, a problem which is not difficult at SWAS because of the five-major study load and the 11-month school year.

INTEGRATION OF BLACK STUDIES

The philosophy developed jointly by the parents and the professional staff of SWAS is that black studies should be integrated into the regular curriculum. American history is viewed as a compendium of the contributions of both white and black Americans; American literature includes

the major black writers and poets; music points up the great influence of jazz and the blues. The racist view of history propagated in many outdated texts is ameliorated by more modern books, including many devoted solely to the contributions of the black man, such as Dark Symphony, Africa: Today and Yesterday, and Manchild in the Promised Land, to list just a few of the 100-odd titles acquired over the past three years.

The French-language poetry of Haiti and French-speaking Africa was a recent topic in the French III classes, while the Harlem Renaissance was explored in the junior humanities classes. In addition, students are encouraged to use their independent study time to research the race's substantial contributions in all fields.

An ideal balance in this sensitive area is difficult to achieve; there are pressure groups from within the student body and from without, militating for either more or less attention to black studies. Thus far, both groups seem relatively satisfied, and the flexibility innate in the program makes curriculum changes, where needed, easy to effect.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF LOCAL UNIVERSITIES

Newark is fortunate in being a university town. In addition to Rutgers, the State University, Seton Hall, Newark College of Engineering, Bloomfield College and Montclair State College are all within easy traveling distance,

and all have made major contributions to the School Within a School program.

Significant effort is made to bring into the program experts from the universities in esoteric subjects which the staff feels can best be handled by such experts. The local universities have been extremely helpful in this regard, sending highly qualified people to conduct seminars in such diverse subjects as medieval England, the medieval period in the non-Western world, the history of the labor movement, modern physics, comparative religion, and occupational opportunities.

Bloomfield College makes its facilities available to SWAS physics classes and provides a professor at no charge to supervise the experience. Rutgers University provides a complete internship program. Advice in curriculum planning is available from all of the participating disciplines.

Plans are now being drawn for early placement of some highly talented youngsters at Newark College of Engineering. The students will take courses there while still enrolled at SWAS, and receive credit for advanced placement upon successful completion. Other plans call for similar advanced placement courses at Rutgers University.

EUROPEAN TRIP IN SENIOR YEAR

The intensive, four-year language program, added to the continual study of Western culture, sparked a desire

within the students to see Europe and possibly Africa. Since there are approximately 65 seniors due to graduate in June, 1973, the costs of such a trip have been estimated at \$19,500, allowing about \$300 per student. Unless some money from a benevolent foundation is forthcoming, the students plan to raise the money themselves.

The highly-active Parents' Association is hard at work on fund-raising schemes. Spurred by reports of thousands of dollars raised by other local schools through candy sales, the juniors are selling it by the bushel. Other methods may include a senior play, a benefit show, and a "cocktail sip" (for adults only). The three undergraduate classes, knowing that their senior year is only a matter of time, are already beginning their fund-raising preparations.

Newark is a bankrupt city: School Within a School is struggling through its infancy on a minimal budget. Whether the trip will become a reality for any of the students is as yet an unanswered question.

THE SWAS NEWSLETTER

In order to let the community know of the various activities that are an integral part of the SWAS program, a newsletter is published twice monthly by Mrs. Gloria Sheldon's journalism class. It contains curriculum news, news about trips, speakers, symposiums, sports, and the students themselves.

An important part of the newsletter is its function as an outlet for creative writing. South Side has no literary magazine, and until now there was no place where a good poem or article could be published. The students take great pride and pleasure in seeing their work in print, and much of it is of superior quality for high school writing.

The newsletter is sent to all members of the Advisory Board, all parents and all students, as well as to local universities and business firms. Copies are also sent to each member of the Board of Education and the Assistant Superintendent of Schools in charge of Secondary Education, Miss Theresa David.

Up until now, the costs of producing the newsletter have been borne by SWAS's meager budget. However, the Community Relations Department of the Port of New York Authority has volunteered its printing department for the task.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The responsibility for assuring that each SWAS graduate will have the opportunity to attend the college of his choice is part of the commitment that the program makes to its youngsters. A certain percentage of the students will undoubtedly receive scholarships through normal channels, either offered by the colleges themselves or New Jersey State Scholarships, which are granted on the basis of PSAT scores, class standing, and need.

Mr. Don Treloar of the Community Relations Department of the Prudential Insurance Company heads a committee to raise whatever additional funds may be needed. Such funds are estimated at \$75,000 yearly. Efforts to raise the money are being made through local businesses. Also, a consortium of local banks is being arranged so that low-interest loans will be readily available to SWAS graduates.

Mr. Treloar is optimistic about the possibility of raising the needed funds, based on his early exploration of the problem. The bank loans will be used as a last-resort measure.

SWAS students may also need money for travel to the college, for books and, in some cases, for clothes, as many of the families are receiving public assistance. Through the combined efforts of the Advisory Committee, the Parents' Association, and the business community of Newark, the necessary funds, hopefully, will be raised.

Chapter 5

THE STAFF OF THE SCHOOL WITHIN A SCHOOL

PRINCIPAL

The principal of South Side High School, Dr. Leo Litzky, retains ultimate in-house responsibility and authority for all activities quartered in his school, including the School Within A School. He has, however, delegated to the director of the program the authority to implement the SWAS concept and all of its components.

Dr. Litzky, who holds a Ph. D. from New York University in social science and in educational supervision and administration, and is also a staff member of the Alfred Adler Mental Hygiene Clinic in New York, was enthused about the program from its inception. For any experimental program of this nature, the cooperation of the school's head administrator is an obvious necessity. The enthusiasm of Dr. Litzky and his willingness to assume the extra burdens which the SWAS program created was a strong factor in the program's success.

PROJECT DIRECTOR

Much of the success of the program is directly traceable to the innovative and daring conceptions of its 38-year-old director, Seymour Spiegel. His responsibilities and functions include supervision of the staff, curriculum

development, school organization, staff training, fiscal planning and financial controls, liaison with the Advisory Committee and the Parents' Association, staff and student recruitment, preparing required reports and evaluative data, the raising of additional funds through foundations, and whatever other responsibilities which may be assigned by the Board of Education.

Mr. Spiegel also functions as what Ramsey et al. call a "Counselor-Director"²⁴ Here are some of his functions in this connection:

1. He coordinates and is responsible for the guidance program at SWAS, working with the guidance counselor.
2. He is responsible for the development of a team concept of teaching.
3. He is responsible for parent conferences for the purpose of developing a close working relationship between the parents and the school.
4. He is in charge of developing an active program of in-service training in the areas of team teaching, curriculum, and group guidance for the teaching teams.
5. He coordinates the ordering of books and other instructional supplies for the teams.

In actuality, the duties and activities of the program director are even more diverse and widespread than the above would indicate. In combining guidance and administrative functions, he is constantly available to students, teachers, parents, and the Board of Education.

Most important, Mr. Spiegel provides a cohesive factor and an esprit de corps without which the program would

lose much of its unique character. He creates an atmosphere which encourages innovation and provides the impetus which makes teachers unafraid to try new ideas, secure in the knowledge that failure or success is less important than willingness to experiment toward the goal of a more complete educational experience for each student.

Mr. Spiegel's background includes a B.A. in English from Rutgers University; an M. Ed. in Administration and Supervision of the Secondary School, Rutgers University, 1960; and his current project, a Ph.D. from Rutgers Graduate School of Education in the field of administration and supervision. He holds a Supervisor of English certificate as well as a secondary school principal's certificate. Before his current assignment, he was chairman of the English Department at South Side High School for two years.

In addition, from February, 1968, to October, 1970, Mr. Spiegel was employed as a consultant on federally funded programs, and was involved in adult basic and vocational education program development of the San Diego, California Community Colleges in 1969.

TEAM LEADERS

Each team of five teachers is led by an experienced teacher who is willing to assume full responsibility for the workings and interaction of the team. The duties of

the team leader include presiding at daily team meetings; effecting schedule changes when needed; acting as liaison between the team and the parents; notifying parents when a youngster is doing poorly or seems to have a problem; coordinating the interdisciplinary curriculum; and attending team leader meetings on a weekly basis.

Mr. Joseph Malanga is currently the sophomore team leader, as well as functioning as assistant to the program director. A teacher for seven years, he has a B.A. in Social Studies from Paterson State, an M.A. in History from the University of Connecticut, and an M.A. in Social Studies Education from Montclair State College. He is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education.

Team leader for the ninth grade is Edward Cunningham, who taught for several years at sururban school before coming into the program. He holds a B.A. in English from the University of Scranton and has taken courses towards his masters' degree at several local universities.

The sole member of the distaff side among team leaders is Mrs. Gloria Sheldon, a magna cum laude graduate of Rutgers University College who will receive a Masters in the Humanities from Newark State College in June, 1972. She is a former newspaperwoman, and uses this skill to teach journalism at SWAS, in addition to her English-humanities classes. Mrs. Sheldon taught English at South Side for seven years prior to joining the SWAS staff.

TEACHING STAFF

The teaching staff is recruited each year by a committee comprising department chairmen in the involved discipline, the program director, representatives from the current teaching staff, and parents.

The unusual nature of the SWAS curriculum and scheduling requires that special consideration be given to teacher selection procedures. As the teachers continually restructure the school day to fit the needs of the course of study, only teachers who can move easily from one method of instruction to another and who can adapt rapidly to unexpected demands find satisfaction in the program. The special requirement that they spend a significant part of their day in curriculum development, normally eliminates inexperienced teachers from participation. This combination of characteristics tends to limit the selection of teachers to young, flexible men and women who have had at least three years of successful teaching experience.

Attention is given to maintaining a racially balanced staff. Other characteristics much in demand are a sense of humor, a strong academic background, and the ability to function well in a team.

In recruiting teachers, every secondary school in the city is canvassed. While no additional salary is paid, one inducement is the guaranteed eleventh month of employment.

at full pay. Additionally, the opportunity to become involved in the creation of a new program and the stimulation of teaching academically motivated students, are attractive challenges.

SUPPORT STAFF

Guidance Counselor

An important part of the SWAS staff is the full-time guidance counselor, Willie Young, a dynamic, youthful Montclair State College graduate who has succeeded in winning the confidence of most of his counselees.

His duties are highly diverse. In addition to the normal, day-to-day counseling of some 265 youngsters, he must:

1. Take charge of recruiting next year's crop of students from the city's 28 8th-grade schools.
2. Arrange special programs concerning career choices.
3. Visit colleges in which a number of students have expressed interest, to apprise their admissions counselors of the SWAS program.
4. Help students with their college choices and applications.
5. Supervise testing of new applicants.
6. Counsel students who, for any reason, are not doing well and need help with personal or academic problems.

During the 1970-1971 school year, three counselor's aides were employed, working five hours daily. They helped the counselor with his myriad duties, as well as functioning as chaperones on educational trips, as clerks for recording attendance and marks on computerized data sheets, and as

contacts in community and parent relations. The salaries for these aides were paid by the Office of Economic Opportunity as part of a one-year grant; because of a new economic posture in Washington, this grant ended at the conclusion of the school year, and the positions were abolished. It is hoped that renewed economic prosperity will permit further financial help, and the aides can be rehired, thus relieving Mr. Young of many of his minor duties.

The Teacher As Guidance Counselor

Under the team set-up of the School Within A School, each teacher functions in a guidance capacity; the team of teachers assigned to a special group of students shares in the world of each student. The relationship can be especially close because the team sees the same students every school day for eleven months. At the team meeting, variations in an individual student's behavior can be noted and discussed. Special educational programs and schedules can be set up to meet individual needs.

Often, a student is called in to a team meeting so that all of his teachers can talk with him at the same time, exploring the causes of low marks, behavioral difficulties, etc. Once the problem is ascertained, it is turned over to the head guidance counselor for his professional judgement. If needed, a social worker can be consulted, or even a psychological case worker (as in the case of one 14-year-old

girl who was raped on the streets and subsequently required a legal abortion, affecting her entire life as well as her schoolwork).

Another useful technique is the phone call to the parent. Whenever a student receives a "d" or below on a test, the parent is notified. If the problem becomes pervasive, the parent is asked to attend a team meeting, with the student present. If the problem intensifies, the student is placed on a three-week probation: since SWAS is a program for selected students, each student must earn his right to remain in it.

Thus the program's director, the guidance counselor, and the teaching team, all function in a guidance capacity. Through this three-pronged approach, serious problems are kept to a minimum.

Teacher Interns: The Rutgers University Program

The School Within a School has been chosen by Rutgers University as an off-campus teacher training center, the only school in Newark so designated. Mr. Joseph Malanga was appointed to act as coordinator of the program, which provides for an unlimited number of interns to work at SWAS for ten weeks at a time, doing their practice teaching. The interns are college graduates who are presently matriculating for teachers' certificates and Masters' degrees. To date, four interns have completed their assignments, and

another six to eight are expected during the next few months.

The program, administered by Dr. James Wheeler of Rutgers, pays SWAS \$100 for each intern permitted to teach. Benefits, beside the financial, are:

1. A closer working relationship with Rutgers, the State University.
2. The interns have the opportunity to work in an innovative program with highly motivated students, yet to become accustomed to working in the high-pressure world of the ghetto school.
3. The students gain from the diverse talents of the young interns, who bring fresh and new ideas into the curriculum.
4. The teachers to whom interns are assigned have more time for curriculum development. In addition, each is designated a "Master Teacher," which is a boon for the ego if not for the wallet.

The interns function as small group discussion leaders, independent study counselors, research assistants, community relations emissaries, recruiters, and personal problem counselors to the SWAS students. They teach specific classes under direct teacher supervision and participate in special educational programs.

The interns work in social studies, the humanities, English, music, art and language. Experience has shown that, because of their youth and enthusiasm, they quickly relate to the students and make valuable contributions in the area of student-teacher rapport.

The overriding significance of employing teacher interns in SWAS is the opportunity for these aspiring teachers to learn

about the possibilities of innovation in inner-city high schools. The flexible scheduling, independent study programs, and schools within schools as described in professional educational literature are significant advances in educational technology and procedures; however, this kind of innovation is almost unknown in large city high schools. To a great extent, educators with experience in urban schools are skeptical of the feasibility of implementing these new ideas, and not without good reason. Buildings are antiquated and over-crowded, and funds are unavailable for additional expenses that innovations frequently require. And yet, SWAS provides just such an experimental base for new ideas within an urban community. The opportunity for these aspiring teachers to see innovations working successfully in a school like South Side High in Newark is vastly worthwhile in terms of the future of the profession and the future of education in the city.²⁵

Project Secretary

The project secretary functions in both administrative and curricular areas. Her duties include the preparation and duplication of instructional materials and curriculum guides as they are developed by the professional staff. She is also responsible for maintaining financial records, filing reports to the Board of Education, recording student attendance and academic progress, handling correspondence and the telephones,

and performing duties necessary to the adequate functioning
of the Advisory Committee and the Parents' Association.

Chapter 6

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

THE ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As part of the Board of Education's memorandum which created the School Within A School, an Advisory Committee was mandated to serve specific functions. The memorandum itself states:

A special advisory committee for the project shall be set up and shall meet at least four times a year. It shall consist of 15 individuals and shall include representatives of parents, local business and industry, local colleges and universities, community organizations, and organizations of teachers and school administrators. The advisory committee shall hear reports of the project's progress, offer criticism and proposals for improving and modifying the project, and render such assistance and support as it may judge appropriate. The advisory committee shall be named by the board on the recommendation of the Superintendent.²⁶

The Advisory Committee has played an important role in the development of the School Within A School since its inception. In addition to advising on curricular matters and pledging financial support for scholarships for graduates, some of the corporations have provided free bus transportation for students so that the classroom experience could be extended to museums, libraries, and theaters.

Prudential Insurance Company has been very cooperative in developing a mathematics program for SWAS students during the summer of 1970 and in providing assistance for the fund-

raising scholarship drive. The Newark Public Library, whose director is a member of the Advisory Committee, has provided the extensive facilities of the Newark Public Library and the Newark Museum for anthropological studies. The New Jersey Industrial Council has offered transportation services for students. Additionally, members of the Advisory Committee have sat on curriculum sub-committees. They have also helped develop outlets for publicity so that the community can learn more about the program.

Upon the advice of the Advisory Committee, contacts have been made with private foundations who have offered funds to help support the program. SWAS has received a \$3,000 grant from the Charles Englehard Foundation, thus financing the summer Parkway program. The initial contact in this successful effort was through the Englehard Industries representative on the Advisory Committee. Western Electric has also granted \$500.00 in transportation funds. The Committee also plans an advisory role in personnel selection.

Since SWAS is in constant need of operating funds above and beyond the Board's rather stringent allotments, the Advisory Committee is currently working on this problem.

The entire list of Advisory Committee members is contained in Appendix A .

THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Much of the success of SWAS is due to its parents. Meetings of the Parents' Association are held monthly, alter-

nating between afternoon and evening meetings to assure maximum attendance of working parents. Attendance is very high for an urban school; an average of 80 to 100 parents is not uncommon.

The parents of SWAS students are, generally, better educated and more upward striving than those of the average ghetto school. Their values are middle-class; they insist upon the best possible education for their children, and work very hard to assure it. Parents form committees to raise funds, to be part of the teacher selection process, to disseminate information about the program, and to contact City Hall and the Board of Education when something needs to be done. Most often, they get it done.

A feature of every year so far has been a dinner-dance held at a local restaurant, with the proceeds going to SWAS. The tickets sell for \$25 a couple and the affair is usually well-attended.

Every effort is made to involve the parents in curriculum decisions, plans for trips, and both the problems and successes of the program. Recently, the Parents' Association used some of its funds to purchase 25 alto recorders for the school's recorder ensemble, at a cost of \$200. Plans are also underway to raise additional funds, for whatever purposes will most help the students.

Chapter 7

THE IMPACT OF THE SWAS PROGRAM ON OTHER STUDENTS HOUSED IN THE SAME BUILDING

"Most rewarding of all of the aspects of the School Within A School is the free and creative atmosphere in which the students and teachers work. This soaring spirit, which so permeates SWAS, has not only enriched the lives of those students in the program but the spill-off for the rest of South Side has been most noticeable. The social contagion and intellectual ferment emanating from SWAS has contributed to improved school discipline, stimulated students in the regular program, and motivated teachers in the regular program to be more innovative."

The above is an excerpt from a letter written by Dr. Leo Litzky, principal of South Side, to Mayor Kenneth Gibson of Newark. It sums up the general feeling about the impact of the SWAS program on other students housed in the same building.

On February 2, Dr. Litzky attended a Mayor's Task Force meeting to inquire into why South Side is a quiet school, not prey to the disturbances plaguing so many of Newark's high schools. Dr. Litzky gave full credit to the presence of SWAS within the building, since many SWAS students are among the student leadership.

Last year, SWAS students comprised a bare 10.7% of the total school population, yet these students contributed 54% to South Side's Honor Roll. Broken down by class, the freshmen earned 76% of the honor roll places won by ninth graders. Similarly, 68% of the sophomores on the

Honor Roll were SWAS students. Additionally, these students are extraordinarily active in South Side student affairs. They frequently represent South Side at community functions. Fifty per cent of the twirlers and cheerleaders are SWAS students. The 62 boys who were in the program last year filled 70 athletic positions on South Side teams through the four seasons of the year. They scored touchdowns, won the State championship in the long jump, played baseball, basketball, and ran cross country.

By the fourth year of operation, SWAS will total approximately one-fourth of the over-all population at the school. It is too early to fully ascertain the effect on the rest of the student body, but the large numbers of academically talented and thoughtful students has been seen as having a "cooling effect" on the bulk of the student body. There have been no major racial problems or student uprisings at the school for several years; the hallways are relatively quiet; there are few fist fights or disorders of any kind. Since these are problems which many urban schools face, it may be assumed that there is some correlation between the calm at South Side and the presence of SWAS within its confines.

There are, of course, certain problems, the major one being the acceptance of the program by the faculty and the other students. Some view the program as undemocratic, for the "chosen few". Others resent the four-period classroom

schedule of the faculty, without taking into account the larger responsibilities that SWAS faculty members must accept. Some of the students resent that their school is being used for a program such as SWAS, thus creating additional problems of lack of space.*

One area in which no jealousy is felt is in the matter of trips. School Within A School students are not eligible for Title I funds; thus they take many fewer trips yearly than does the average South Sider. But there is some resentment over the brand-new books which the program uses, and over some of the special programs arranged for SWAS students.

But for all these negative aspects, the presence of SWAS in the building is a positive force. As the program grows in numbers and prestige, it will become more and more integrated into the total student body, for the potential good of all concerned.

In addition, the exemplary scholastic role played by SWAS students provides a true "academic varsity" for South Side, a varsity to which all students can aspire, and earn inclusion at the end of their freshman year if they demonstrate adequate ability and motivation.

*In actuality, the presence of SWAS has not added to the problems of overcrowding at the school, as certain students who would normally have fed into South Side were annexed instead to other nearby high schools.

Chapter 8

FUNDING

The first year of the School Within A School's operation, it functioned without any additional funds from the Board of Education, other than those normally spent to educate approximately 100 students. Although Assistant Superintendent of Schools ^{Dr.} Ben Epstein had given birth to the idea of the school, the city of Newark had no additional funds to assure it a lusty life.

During this first year, it was seen that without additional funds, many of the innovative ideas would be stillborn. Thus Seymour Spiegel, director of the program and a specialist in government funding programs, contacted the Office of Economic Opportunity, applying for funds for a demonstration project, using the rationale that if such a program for gifted children could work in Newark, it could work in other cities where such problems exist. The O.E.O. responded with a grant of \$59,539 for the 1970-71 school year, with the understanding that the grant could be renewed for a second year. However, economic conditions dictated that the current administration cut back severely on federal funds for such projects, and the second year grant was not received.

The O.E.O. grant specified certain sums for personnel

costs, salaries, fringe benefits, consultant services, non-personnel costs, travel, consumable supplies, rental or purchase of equipment, and other costs. The local share was \$192,910, making a total governmental budget of \$252,449 for the school year. In addition, the Engelhard Foundation granted SWAS \$3,000 in April, 1970, for use in the summer Parkway program.

This year, the Newark Board of Education is bearing the total cost of the program, \$251,621. This is a minimal budget, since the school has increased one-third in number of pupils and faculty. This amount is supplemented by \$50 a month from Bell Telephone Laboratories, who have "adopted" SWAS and send personnel to the school frequently to observe classes; \$300 from Rutgers University as part of the intern program; and whatever funds the Advisory Committee and the Parents' Association can make available.

The Newark Board of Education is currently in the process of approving next year's budget. SWAS submitted a 1972-1973 budget request of \$66,599, not including personnel costs. The proposed budget breaks down as follows:

I. Enrichment

*A.	Educational visits to museums, theaters, libraries, etc.; \$7.00 per student per year for admissions	\$2,800
**B.	Honoraria for guest speakers with expertise in specialized area; 25 lecturers @\$25	625
* C.	Charter bus rental: 8 trips for 400 students @ \$75 per bus	5,400

**D. Supplementary and special curricular materials for independent study and special projects	2,000
II. Curriculum Development	
**A. Curriculum specialists: 12 consultant days	1,200
*B. Special materials for curriculum development	750
**C. In-service training for staff	2,000
**D. 75 release-time teachers @\$36 a day	2,700
III. Community Aides	
** A. 4 @ \$3.25 per hour, 6 hours a day	8,424
IV. Transportation	
**A. Needy student transportation to and from school	11,200
V. Administrative Expenses	
*A. Telephone and postage	2,000
*B. Miscellaneous	500
VI. College Admissions	
**A. SAT and Achievement Test fees - \$20 per student for 100 students	2,000
**B. College application fees	4,500
**C. Counselor visits to college admissions officers	3,000
*VII. Textbooks and supplies	15,000
**VIII. Audio-Visual Hardware	<u>2,500</u>
	\$66,599

At this time, the Board of Education has not yet adopted a school budget for the 1972-1973 school year; however, the Superintendent's office has indicated that financial support for the program would be forthcoming but not to the extent that

was requested. The items preceded by one asterisk (*) were reduced considerably; the items preceded by two asterisks (**) were eliminated entirely. The remaining items, if the budget is passed according to the indications from the Superintendent's office, total less than \$10,000, exclusive of personnel costs.

At the last budget hearing, in October, 1971, there were rumors that the Board, in an economy measure, would cease to fund the program altogether. Up until that time, the School Within A School had made an effort to maintain a low profile in the community, as there are certain groups which oppose the concept of special education for gifted children in urban schools. The parents rose magnificently to the occasion; every newspaper and radio program was inundated with information about the threat to the program. The Star-Ledger responded with an editorial, excerpted below:

A school for gifted urban youngsters is threatened with extinction after only two years of successful operation because of a short-sighted cutback in federal funds.

With a strong contemporary emphasis on providing an improved quality of education, the closing of this experimental project would be highly damaging to a city such as Newark that is acutely aware of its educational shortcomings.

The School Within a School was the brainchild of a forward-looking educator, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Dr. Benjamin Epstein, who sought to create a program for youngsters brighter than their classmates but without means to attend private schools. Promising eighth-graders (one student has an IQ of 157 and another of 170) were screened before being admitted to the 11-month program.

Obviously, the project is worth saving...It can be resuscitated if the Board of Education takes the needed affirmative fiscal action at tomorrow's meeting. The school can get by with a minimum of \$30,000 to \$50,000. This is rather an insignificant sum in comparison with the overall school budget, but it could be a richly rewarding one in terms of social and academic accomplishment.²⁷

On the night of the Board meeting, some 150 parents attended. Two hours before it was scheduled to start, SWAS students started picketing outside the Board, carrying signs urging the Board to "Save Our School." It was effective: the Board, in one of its first orders of business, agreed to continue funding the School Within A School until June, 1972.

The solidarity and community spirit which moved these parents and students was a striking answer to charges that the parents of the ghetto are apathetic or just don't care. They are a force to be reckoned with.

Chapter 9

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

It is too early to evaluate fully the success of the SWAS program. It has not yet had a graduating class. But positive signs abound:

- *The absentee rate of the School Within A School runs well below the high school average in Newark, which is 15%. At SWAS, it is less than 5% daily. Some students have never missed a day, despite travel which involves one or more buses for many students.
- *SWAS students dominate the honor roll in the three grade levels to which they currently belong.
- *A SWAS student is president of the General Organization of South Side High School.
- *There are few discipline problems. Parents are called to school with regularity, thus stopping minor problems before they can grow.
- *SWAS students earn constant praise when they have the opportunity to visit business and corporations in the area. After a recent junior trip to the American Can Company, the executives of the company expressed amazement at the perspicacity of the students' questions and the depth of their understanding.
- *The results of the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test taken by the juniors indicate that the average score of SWAS students was 100 points higher than the average in South Side proper. Forty per cent of the students scored above the 50th percentile nationally, and 11 students ranked above the 90th percentile.

Evaluation, both from outside sources and self-evaluation, is a constant activity at SWAS. Rutgers University professors and students observe classes on a regular

basis, giving feedback to the administration on their observations. Classes are also visited often by the supervisory personnel of South Side, who offer critical evaluation in their areas of expertise.

One of the most important forms of self-evaluation is the students themselves. Highly articulate, they do not hesitate to voice their opinions on curriculum, the quality of the education being offered at SWAS, the effectiveness of a certain teacher or teaching activity, etc. Recently, Bell Laboratories sent several of its management personnel to observe the school and talk to the students. Here are some typical student comments:

I feel we have complete academic freedom to explore whatever interests us, both in the classroom and in independent study.

One of my friends who is a freshman in college is reading Candide, just like we are!

The idea of college doesn't frighten me any more. I feel I can handle it.

The teachers really give a damn. We spend a lot of time after school just talking...they are more like friends.

It's interesting.. I'm never absent if I can help it. I just don't feel I can afford to miss a day, especially in physics.

To assessmore concretely the contributions of a program of this kind, it is necessary for more sophisticated evaluative procedures to be applied. One such plan

is for a ten-year longitudinal study using a control group from outside of SWAS.

Because of the special demands that a program of this type place on the teacher, there is also a need for more in-service training of teachers in areas of curriculum development, classroom management, making use of scheduling flexibility, etc.

Another need, identified early but difficult to solve, is that of more accurate methods for selecting students for SWAS. The type of qualities needed for success in the program do not always manifest themselves on standardized tests alone, nor do teacher recommendations always prove useful. There is a special task force working on this problem at the present time.

While some degree of the success or failure of the program may be measured by how well SWAS students perform on such tests as the S.A.T. and on their success in college (still an unknown), the essential indicators will be the students' ability to define and solve problems in their personal lives and in society, the degree to which they make meaningful use of their leisure time, and, ultimately, the contributions they make to society.

FOOTNOTES

¹George Hallam, "Newark Collegians Show Sharp Increase," Newark (New Jersey) News, October 26, 1970, Sec. I, p. 1.

²Newark, New Jersey Board of Education. Data Sheet for Newark Schools: A Report Prepared by the Department of Reference and Research. December 11, 1967, p. 1, Item 6.

³Editorial, The Star-Ledger (Newark), June 26, 1968, p. 36.

⁴Newark, New Jersey Board of Education. Report of City-Wide Testing Program, Grades 3,6 and 7 for 1956 and 1966, pps. 1 and 2 respectively.

⁵Ewart Rouse, "Newark, Princeton show grim inequality of Jersey education," The Star-Ledger (Newark), January 20, 1972, p. 16.

⁶Ronald Sullivan, "Realty-Tax Financing of Schools in Jersey Ruled Unconstitutional," The New York Times, January 20, 1972, p. 1.

⁷U.S., Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Report to the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Commissioner of Education. Education of the Gifted and Talented (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), Vol. I, p. I-1.

⁸Ibid..

⁹Ibid., p. II-7

¹⁰Ibid., p. X

¹¹Newark, New Jersey Board of Education. Data Sheet for Newark Schools, op. cit., p. 2, Item 10.

¹²K.R. Plath, Schools Within Schools: A Study of High School Organization. Secondary School Administration Series (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965), p.66.

¹³"Schools Within A School May Be the Answer," Better Schools Spotlight Report, National Citizens Council for Better Schools, November, 1957, cited by Robert D. Ramsey, Owen M. Henson and Harold L. Hula in The Schools-Within-A-School Program (New York, Parker Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), p. 5.

14 Plath, op. cit., p. 67.

15 James A. Meyer, "Salvaging Team Teaching," The Clearing House, December, 1969, p. 203.

16 George Peltz and John Shaughnessy, "Interdisciplinary Team Teaching: An Approach That Works With Seventh Graders," National American Secondary Schools Principals Journal, September, 1970, p. 52.

17 William M. Rogge, "Independent Study is Self-Directed," Independent Study: Bold New Venture, eds. David W. Beagles III and Edward G. Buffie (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1965), p. 9.

18 Ibid., p. 28.

19 Henry S. Resnick, "High School With No Walls," Education Digest, March, 1970, p. 16.

20 Editorial, The Star Ledger, op. cit.

21 Letter dated August 18, 1971 from John C. Littleford, Director, The New Jersey School Consortium, to Mr. Seymour Spiegel, Director, School Within A School.

22 Letter dated July 20, 1971, from John C. Littleford, Director, The New Jersey School Consortium, to Mr. Howard E. Quirk, Director, Victoria Foundation, Inc.

23 James J. Fenwick, "The Mini-Course Curriculum," National Association of Secondary School Principals Journal, February, 1970, p. 115.

24 Robert D. Ramsey, Owen M. Henson and Harold L. Hula, The Schools-Within-A School Program (New York, Parker Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), p. 60.

25 Seymour Spiegel, "A Proposal for Funding to the Office of Economic Opportunity for a School Within a School," (New Jersey: Newark Board of Education, 1970). (Xeroxed).

26 Newark, New Jersey Board of Education, Memorandum to the Board of Education from Franklyn Titus, Superintendent of Schools, November 6, 1968.

27 Editorial, The Star Ledger, op. cit.

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APPENDIX

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL WITHIN A SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Calvin Allen
Sears, Roebuck & Company

Mr. Ed Bess
L. Bamberger Co. - Newark

Mr. James E. Bryan, Director
Newark Public Library

Miss Sally Carroll
President, N.A.A.C.P.

Mrs. Mariam Charnow
Office of Economic Opportunity

Dr. Frank Cordasco
Assistant to the President
Montclair State College

Dr. Ben Epstein
Assistant Superintendent of
Schools - Newark

Mr. V. T. Finan
Engelhard Industries

Mr. Julius Foster
Western Electric Corp.

Mr. David Fraziers
Clinton Ave. Merchants
Association

The Hon. Kenneth Gibson
Mayor of Newark

Mrs. Carole Graves, President
Newark Teachers Union

Mr. Gene Herbster
Bell Telephone Labs

Mr. John F. Hughes
City Business Machines

Mr. Cole A. Lewis
Prudential Insurance Co.

Dr. Leo Litzky, Principal
South Side High School

Mrs. Lucy Parker
People's Action Group
Area Board Number 3 U.C.C.

Mr. Joseph Partenheimer
Business and Industrial
Coordinating Council

Mr. Leo Rogers
Howard Savings Institution

Mr. David Ruff
Better Business Bureau

Mrs. Alice Shapiro
Asst. to Vice-President
Rutgers University

Mr. Donald N. Treloar
Prudential Insurance Co.

Mr. Maurice Veneri
N. J. Industrial Union
Council

Mr. Roy H. Wager
State Dept. of Education

Dr. James Wheeler
Rutgers University

Mr. Earl Williams
N. J. Industrial Union
Council